



## Travel Industry Update

January 13, 2021

### U.S. Will Require Negative COVID-19 Results from All Incoming Travelers

- Ten months into the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. will begin requiring all international travelers—including returning U.S. citizens—to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test in order to board a flight to the country. The move will go into effect on January 26, according to [a new order from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- Travelers coming into the U.S. from international destinations will now need to get a viral test within three days of departure and share their negative results with their airline before a flight (antibody tests are not accepted). The CDC says that documentation showing that you've recovered from COVID-19 will also suffice for those who continue to test positive after recovery. Airlines will be in charge of verifying this documentation, and if you decide not to test or provide your results, “the airline must deny boarding,” according to the CDC.
- The CDC also recommends getting tested again three to five days after arriving in the U.S. and quarantining at home for seven days post-travel.
- First reported by the Wall Street Journal, the CDC's announcement on universal testing for travelers entering the U.S. expands the recent U.K.-specific passenger testing that was announced in late December in an effort to slow the spread of a more contagious variant of the virus. (The new strain has since been found in at least six states in the U.S.) Non-U.S. citizens and non-permanent residents coming from Europe, the U.K., and China will still be barred from entry, with or without a negative test.
- Earlier this month, Airlines for America, which represents all major U.S. airlines, urged the U.S. government to institute “a global program to require testing for travelers to the United States,” in lieu of the current travel restrictions for international travelers, Reuters reported. “We believe a well-planned program focused on increasing testing of travelers to the United States will further these objectives in a much more effective way than the blanket travel restrictions currently in place,” Airlines for America stated in its letter.
- This testing protocol has already been implemented by a few U.S. states for domestic travel, allowing for shortened quarantine times with a negative result ahead of flight. Hawaii requires negative COVID-19 results from a test taken within 72 hours of departure by an approved testing partner, and some islands require additional testing on arrival, while travelers to Alaska must arrive with proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure. New York now requires travelers to test within three days of departing for New York and quarantine for three days upon arrival before taking a second test. The CDC's announcement makes this the first country-wide testing policy for international travelers in the U.S.

## **JetBlue temporarily suspends service to 4 more airports, extends hiatus on 4 others**

- New York-based JetBlue won't resume flights to Baltimore/Washington (BWI), Burbank (BUR), Ontario, Calif. (ONT) or San Jose, Calif. (SJC) until June 2021, according to the latest Cirium schedule data and confirmed by the carrier.
- Over the weekend, JetBlue loaded a revised schedule for the first four months of 2021, which included removing all flights from the aforementioned four airports into June.
- JetBlue also said it would temporarily suspend flights to four more cities — Albuquerque (ABQ); Burlington, Vermont (BTV); Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP) and Portland, Oregon (PDX) — for nearly eight weeks. JetBlue's flights to those cities will drop off the schedule on Feb. 11 before returning April 1, according to the carrier.

## **Hawaiian Airlines opens testing site in Long Beach**

- Hawaiian Airlines partnered with Long Beach, Calif., Airport on Monday to open a pre-travel COVID-19 testing site that will be available exclusively for the airline's passengers traveling to Hawaii.
- The drive-thru lab, operated by Worksite Labs, offers \$90 shallow nasal swab tests, with results provided within 36 hours so that travelers may be exempt from Hawaii's quarantine. The lab is Long Beach Airport's first dedicated testing clinic.
- Hawaiian also plans to expand its network of pre-travel testing locations to four additional mainland gateway cities before spring, including Sacramento, Calif.; San Diego; Portland, Ore.; and Phoenix.

## **How many passengers have US airlines banned for not wearing masks?**

- Just how many passenger bans are we talking? Several airlines were willing to share their latest stats, including:
  - Alaska: 302
  - Allegiant: 15
  - Delta: 700+
  - Frontier: 500+
  - Hawaiian: 56
  - JetBlue: 114
  - Spirit: 432
  - United: 615
- Based on that breakdown, we're at well over 2,000, among U.S.-based airlines sharing the latest figures. American and Southwest are unable to confirm the number of customers they've banned, however, and Sun Country did not immediately respond to the request. With those carriers factored in, the grand total could be more than 3,000.
- For travelers, there's really no excuse not to comply. All U.S. airlines now require a face covering of some sort, and many are even happy to provide a mask at check-in.

## **Virgin & easyJet Recruit Cabin Crew To Help Vaccinate Britain**

- Given the cuts to their route networks, British airlines are currently faced with a surplus of staff. While they may not be flying, Virgin Atlantic and easyJet are still putting them to good use, aiding in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in the United Kingdom.

- With airlines set to benefit from the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, it is in their interests that the rollout goes as quickly as possible. As such, major British airlines are signing their grounded crews up to help with the process of distributing COVID-19 vaccines across the UK.
- Virgin Atlantic was the first airline to get involved in the effort, yesterday revealing that its crew would be involved in the effort from actually giving the vaccine to patient welfare and managing logistics systems. It makes sense to get involved. After all, many staff members are currently not flying, and cabin crew must undergo medical training as a part of their general training.
- UK low-cost carrier easyJet announced that it would also be aiding the NHS as it seeks to roll out the three COVID-19 vaccinations currently approved in the UK. The easyJet crew who choose to apply for the program will be fast-tracked to become trained vaccinations.

### **COVID-19: Ryanair and Virgin Atlantic rated worst in refunds survey**

- Both were given a customer satisfaction score of 13% when respondents were asked to rate customer service when applying for a refund.
- 26% of Ryanair passengers were satisfied with their refund offer while only 16% of Virgin Atlantic passengers said the same.
- Just under a third of customers who had a flight cancelled by the two airlines said they waited more than three months for the refund.

### **Singapore Airlines staff offered COVID-19 vaccinations**

- Singapore Airlines said on Tuesday some of its Singapore-based staff have been offered COVID-19 vaccinations by the government. Participation is voluntary.
- Those who are eligible for the vaccine include cabin crew, pilots, airport-based staff whose job requires them to interact with passengers, and selected engineering staff.
- Singapore has only approved Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine but has said it has secured enough doses for its 5.7 million population, including from other vaccine-makers like Moderna and Sinovac.
- The city-state is currently rolling out the vaccine among healthcare workers, with the elderly to follow next month. Vaccines will be available to all residents by year-end at the latest.

### **Emirates airline sees full fleet returning to the skies this year**

- Emirates expects its full fleet of Airbus A380s and Boeing 777s to be in use by the end of the year as the rollout of coronavirus vaccines renews confidence in travel.
- Emirates is currently flying 17 of its 115 A380s and 137 of its 160 777s, with some passenger jets operating as cargo planes.
- Last week, Emirates was flying to about 120 destinations, compared to 157 before the pandemic.
- Emirates, which reported a \$3.4 billion half-year loss and received \$2 billion from the Dubai government to help it through crisis, will report a full year loss for the year ending March 31, he said.
- The airline is expected to return to profitability in the year ending March 31, 2023 and as it stands does not need any more financial assistance from the government, Emirates President Tim Clark said.

## **World Travel and Tourism Council Is Against Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccines**

- The CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council says she is against a global mandate to require a COVID-19 vaccination in order to travel.
- “We should never require the vaccination to get a job or to travel,” Gloria Guevara said in remarks at the Reuters Next Conference. “If you require the vaccination before travel, that takes us to discrimination.”
- Australia’s Qantas Airways has said it plans to introduce such a requirement.
- Dale Fisher, chairman of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Outbreak Alert and Response Network, said: “We won’t get back to normal quickly. We know we need to get to herd immunity and we need that in a majority of countries, so we are not going to see that in 2021. There might be some countries that might achieve it but even then that will not create ‘normal’ especially in terms of border controls.”

## **Travel Industry Continues Calls to End Unnecessary Quarantines**

- The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has come out in support of new measures designed to eliminate the need for COVID-19 related quarantines for travelers arriving at popular destinations.
- WTTC President & CEO Gloria Guevara believes that travelers providing tourism officials with proof of a negative coronavirus test taken before arrival is enough to allow them to avoid the mandatory quarantines still in place around the world.
- The key now will be finding COVID-19 tests that are not only universally accepted at destinations around the world, but also affordable enough for travelers of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

## **10 Countries Suffering the Biggest Tourism Revenue Loss Due to COVID-19**

- 1. United States
  - The United States has reported more COVID-19 cases and deaths than any other country in the world as of January 2021. What's more, the U.S. has experienced the biggest tourism revenue loss due to the pandemic, missing out on a remarkable \$147.245 billion in the first ten months of 2020.
- 2. Spain
  - Spain hosted fewer than 20 million foreign visitors in 2020 and saw the largest tourism revenue loss of any European country at \$46,707 million, Official ESTA determined.
- 3. France
  - The world’s most visited country, France typically hosts more than 89 million tourists each year. However, the COVID-19 crisis caused that figure to decline dramatically in 2020, resulting in a total tourism revenue loss of \$42.036 billion over the first 10 months of the year.
- 4. Thailand
  - Thailand has begun safely and slowly reopening to international travelers and that's welcome news for the country's economy as the Asian hotspot has seen a \$37.504 billion loss in tourism revenue due to the ongoing pandemic.
- 5. Germany
  - Germany's \$34.641 billion in total tourism revenue losses from January 2020 to October 2020 is the fifth-most in the world and trails only Spain and France in Europe.

- 6. Italy
  - Italy emerged as a COVID-19 hotspot in the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic and, unsurprisingly, hasn't been able to put a stop to the dramatic tourism revenue losses in the months since, reporting a total loss of \$29.664 billion over the first 10 months of 2020 as the country remains closed to travelers from the U.S. and other key markets.
- 7. United Kingdom
  - While the United Kingdom continues to be impacted by a new variant of coronavirus that experts say appears to spread more easily than others, the country's tourism revenue losses keep piling up, reaching \$27.889 billion based on the latest figures taken into consideration by Official ESTA.
- 8. Australia
  - Australia narrowly trails the U.K. in terms of tourism revenue loss, missing out on \$27.206 billion over the first 10 months of 2020.
- 9. Japan
  - Japan's tourism industry has been equally hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced officials to postpone the Summer Olympics in Tokyo to 2021. Japan's total tourism revenue loss of \$26.027 billion over the first 10 months of 2020 ranks as the ninth-most of any country in the world.
- 10. Hong Kong
  - Elsewhere in Asia, Hong Kong has also been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on travel, experiencing a revenue loss of \$24.069 billion, according to Official ESTA. The Special Administrative Region of China has charted a path to recovery, however, with the Hong Kong Tourism Board recently launching a standardized list of hygiene protocols to help prepare for the resumption of inbound travel.

### **Hawaii to Consider Uniform COVID-19 Travel Restrictions**

- House Speaker Scott Saiki intends to introduce a bill that would make travel to Hawaii easier when the state's House of Representatives reconvenes on January 20.
- According to KHON2, the proposal would require trans-pacific travelers to provide proof of a single negative COVID-19 test result taken within three days of arrival regardless of which island they're visiting.
- While the proposal is welcome news for travelers, Hawaii Gov. David Ige has expressed concern that a uniform travel policy wouldn't allow for flexible response.

### **Hilton Moves Ahead With Plan for Hybrid Meetings to Revive Event Business**

- Hilton launched a hybrid meeting and events strategy Monday aimed at enabling event planners to book meetings at a hotel while also allowing people to tune in virtually from other locations. The program, called Hilton EventReady Hybrid Solutions, builds on its heightened health and safety protocols around events previously announced last summer.
- Hilton leaders emphasize the hybrid meeting platform expansion is more about preparing clients for the future rather than signaling now is a safe time to fully return to hosting in-person gatherings.
- “We’re moving forward with rolling it out because we think our customers need the information now,” said Kelly Knowlen, executive director of sales engagement and

special events at Hilton. “They need the resources and the help now so, even while they’re planning, it might be for future events.”

- The Hybrid Solutions platform outlines more of the logistical measures for hosting a hybrid meeting, particularly around technology infrastructure. The plan arrives after Hilton researched how to best host a hybrid event through five case studies dating back as far as 2019.
- Hilton included larger meetings in its study — including an internal company-wide meeting that had 400 people attending in-person across 25 hotels and 4,300 attendees tuning in virtually. But the plan launched this week focuses on smaller hybrid meetings of 20 people or less.

### **Owner of DC’s Wardman Park Hotel files for bankruptcy**

- Wardman Hotel Owner LLC, an affiliate of Pacific Life Insurance Co., has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and has ended its management contract with Marriott International.
- The 1,152-room Wardman Park, one of the largest hotels in D.C., opened in 1918, during the Spanish Flu pandemic.
- Pacific Life permanently closed the hotel just before filing for bankruptcy protection, and is seeking to sell the property, which could clear the way for the property’s redevelopment.
- The Chapter 11 petition was filed Jan. 11 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware.
- Marriott and Pacific Life have been locked in legal disputes since shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic led to the hotel’s temporary closure in March 2020.
- In September, Marriott filed suit in Montgomery County Circuit Court, seeking millions of dollars of working capital from Pacific Life to keep the hotel in operating condition after several requests for support, citing contractual obligations, funds Pacific Life contends it did not have.
- In December, a judge issued a ruling in favor of Marriott, directing Pacific Life to provide the funding Marriott had requested.
- Marriott’s existing contract to manage the Wardman Park runs through 2029, with a 10-year option after that. Though Pacific Life said in its filing that Wardman Hotel Owner LLC had ended its management contract with Marriott, the petition also seeks court affirmation of its legal right to do so, should Marriott choose to challenge.
- JBG Smith relinquished its joint venture ownership with Pacific Life in the hotel in October.
- The Wardman Park Hotel, at 2600 Woodley Road Northwest, has been home to political figures, including two U.S. presidents, and various celebrities.
- The owner’s bankruptcy filing Monday came the same day that neighboring historic hotel the Omni Shoreham reopened.

### **Disneyland Resort to open this week as a mass COVID-19 vaccine site**

- For the first time in its 65-year history, Disneyland in 2020 announced it would close its gates for an entire month. Due to the spread of COVID-19, the iconic California theme parks shut down on March 12 -- and have remained shut. Ever since, we’ve all been wondering when Disneyland can reopen, and why it hasn’t while Disney’s other global theme parks were free to reopen, including Walt Disney World on the opposite coast of the US.

- Now Disneyland Resort is opening as a mass vaccine site. Orange County announced its first super point-of-dispensing site on Jan. 11, saying Disneyland Resort had "stepped up" to host mass vaccine distribution from this week.
- For now, only people in Phase 1a are permitted access to the vaccine, a group that includes health care workers, law enforcement first responders in high-risk areas and those aged 75 and older. They will be able to book a vaccination appointment at Disneyland through a new app developed with Orange County.
- It's not known yet whether the theme park be opening its gates for this, or whether the vaccinations would take place in Downtown Disney or on the esplanade between Disneyland and California Adventure. Disney didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.